

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE ¹

FALCONRY. A HANDBOOK FOR HUNTERS. By William F. Russell, Jr. Drawings by W. D. Sargent and photographs by the author. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1940: 6 x 9 in., ix + 180 pp., 6 pls., 12 figs. \$2.50.

With the ever increasing interest in birds as a source of recreation and study, it is quite likely that the ancient sport of falconry will again come into its own. In fact, if this inspiring book on falconry reaches the hands of bird-lovers and sportsmen with ample leisure time, it is safe to say that it will come into its own very soon.

Mr. Russell has written this book for the beginner. After considering in his first chapter the four problems with which the prospective falconer is faced, namely, leisure time, what to catch, where the sport may be practiced, and learning how to train and hunt with falcons, he presents a series of chapters dealing with an orientation in the field of hawks, methods of trapping, "manning," and training hawks, the various techniques in hunting such birds as crows, magpies, and game, and the care and management of hawks. He devotes his final chapter to a description of implements and to a glossary. The beginner will find this glossary indispensable since the author faithfully uses the traditional terminology of the sport.

Ornithologists and bird-lovers who are skeptical of falconry, thinking it a cruel sport or a subversive influence in the conservation of hawks, must read this book. They will find that the successful falconer has a deep affection for his birds and gives tireless consideration for their well-being and comfort. Furthermore, they will find that falconry indirectly encourages hawk conservation. A falconer must obtain his hawks alive, either by trapping (a tedious and difficult task in itself), or by taking "eyases" from the nests. Consequently there must be a constant supply of them. Ruthless shooting of hawks decreases his chances of successfully trapping a few individuals; taking all young from nests discourages renesting on succeeding years. In other words, a falconer is interested in perpetuating hawks rather than in wiping them out!

This book contributes considerable interesting information to our knowledge of hawks, particularly their behavior and feeding habits. Ornithologists, however, will be likely to question a number of statements made by the author. For instance, he intimates (p. 13) that "old hawks" in the wild lose their fear of man Accipiters (p. 23) soar in the air only to cool themselves. The tooth on the upper mandible of the falcon's bill (p. 22) is used to sever the spinal cord in the neck of their prey, thus bringing about a quick and painless death, whereas the Accipiters (p. 23), whose beaks are not adapted for severing the spinal cords of their prey, must kill by the pressure which their powerful feet and talons can produce.

The most important treatises on falconry are listed in a brief bibliography. As the author states elsewhere in his text, all of them are either out of print or difficult of access. The well-known article by Louis Agassiz Fuertes, "Falconry, the Sport of Kings," (*Nat. Geogr. Mag.*, 38, 1920), is not included. This article together with the present book constitute the only two important treatises on falconry yet published in America. There is an adequate index.—O. S. Pettingill, Jr.

BIRDS OF THE UPPER PENINSULA OF MICHIGAN. By Leonard Wing. Research Studies of State College of Washington, 7, No. 4, Dec., 1939 [published about Apr. 1, 1940] :163-98, map.

The birds of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan are but poorly known and the present paper is a much needed contribution to the subject. Its title is perhaps slightly mis-leading for there is no attempt to list all species known in that area.

¹ For additional review see page 90.